

Testimony of Norwich Mayor Deb Hinchey
Planning and Development Committee
February 27, 2015

RE: SB 968
An Act Concerning Regional Wastewater Treatment

Good morning Senator Osten, Representative Miller and members of the Planning and Development Committee.

My name is Deb Hinchey and I have the privilege of serving as Mayor of the City of Norwich. I am here today to testify in favor of SB 968, An Act Concerning Regional Wastewater Treatment.

Over the past several years, the City of Norwich and Norwich Public Utilities have undertaken an ambitious and critically important project to upgrade our aging wastewater treatment facility. This project has been the subject of numerous meetings with the community, the NPU Board of Commissioners, tours with interested parties and considerable public discussion and debate.

As you may recall, Governor Malloy and the State Bond Commission approved \$100 million in grants and loans for this project in January of this year.

On behalf of the residents of my city, I would like to express my appreciation for this very significant investment by the State of Connecticut. We view the State's continued support for our project as a vote of confidence for our strategic planning and hard work.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to Senator Osten for her ongoing and unwavering support for this project.

The design plans for our project are at the 100% level and are with the State Department of Energy and Environmental Protection for final review. We are hopeful this project will be put out to bid this summer.

The construction phase of this project will create a large number of good paying jobs - right in the middle of Norwich - in almost every trade imaginable: HVAC, plumbing, construction, carpentry, masonry, operating engineers and laborers.

Just as importantly, NPU's wastewater treatment plant can serve as a catalyst for additional economic development and environmental protection throughout the region.

The NPU treatment plant has been designed with sufficient capacity to accommodate wastewater from a number of surrounding towns. We've been in discussions with our friends in Bozrah, Franklin, Ledyard, Preston, Sprague and Lisbon about their interest in participating in this project.

We believe this project will be an example of the value and importance of taking a collaborative and regional approach to the many challenging issues that our communities face every day.

If these surrounding towns are willing and able to tie into the wastewater treatment plant in Norwich, the project becomes a very significant regional resource. This project addresses

larger environmental concerns and creates opportunities for additional growth and economic development on a regional basis with benefits that extend well beyond the borders of Norwich.

Many smaller towns in Connecticut, particularly in our part of the state, do not have sufficient wastewater treatment capabilities. The NPU wastewater treatment plant will dramatically reduce – and in some cases eliminate – the direct discharge of wastewater into adjacent bodies of water.

With a bigger resource for treating wastewater, the towns in our region will be able to support a wider range of commercial activities – hospitality and recreational developments, manufacturers, retail, restaurants and more housing – than they can today.

All of these activities will create jobs and new sources of revenues for our towns and our state – directly and indirectly - for years and years to come.

I urge the Planning and Development Committee to look favorably on SB 968.

Thank you.